

# CEC served legal notice to postpone by-polls to Sylhet-3

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Five Supreme Court lawyers yesterday served a legal notice on Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) KM Nurul Huda, requesting him to postpone the by-election to Sylhet-3 constituency scheduled to be held on July 28, due to the ongoing pandemic.

Advocate Mohammad Shishir Manir sent the notice on behalf of the lawyers to the CEC through email, saying that holding the by-election on July 28 is contradictory to the ongoing lockdown, which has been enforced by the government.

In the legal notice, the lawyers said there is no constitutional obligation for the election commission to hold the by-election on July 28. They said if the CEC does not postpone it, they will move to the High Court for necessary directives to this effect.

Citing the legal notice, lawyer Shishir Manir said the CEC has reportedly said on Saturday that the by-polls to Sylhet-3 will not be postponed due to constitutional and legal obligations, which is not a correct statement.

The deadline for the by-election is September 7 this year according to article 123 (4) of the constitution.

The article says an election to fill the seat of a member of Parliament which falls vacant otherwise than by reason of the dissolution of Parliament shall be held within ninety days of the occurrence of the vacancy.

Provided that in a case where, in the opinion of the CEC, it is not possible, for reasons of an act of God, to hold such election within the period specified in this clause, such election shall be held within ninety days following next after the last day of such period.

Shishir Manir said holding the by-election to Sylhet-3

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Firefighters spray jets of water inside a burning bus at a garage at Gopibagh's Sadek Khan road in the capital. The fire originated at the garage and spread to five other garages, and gutted two air-conditioned buses and a private car.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

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## Mysterious fires gut buses, car in the capital

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Four buses and a private car were gutted in two separate fires in the capital's Motijheel and Kamalapur areas on Saturday and yesterday.

Two of the buses and the car were burnt when a garage behind Motijheel's Modhumita Cinema caught fire at 11:05am yesterday, said Ershad Hossain, duty officer of Fire Service and Civil Defense headquarters.

After around 45 minutes of efforts, six fire fighting units doused the fire, he added.

He also said an investigation was initiated to determine the cause of the fire.

Earlier on Saturday, another fire had damaged two buses of Bangladesh Road Transport Corporation (BRTC) parked at its Kamalapur depot at 6:28pm.

One of the buses was burnt completely, while the other was partially damaged before four fire units doused the fire at

# Bastuhara canal on deathbed

Locals blame waste dumping, encroachment



For long stretches of the canal, water has been replaced by hyacinths, bushes, and grass. Locals said they use the grass to feed their cattle. The same locals rue the chance to use the canal as a pathway to important destinations within Khulna city.

DIPANKAR ROY, Khulna

Once a 4km long waterbody flowing through Khulna city, today the Bastuhara canal is headed towards virtual extinction, thanks to years of indiscriminate garbage dumping and illegal occupation.

Most of this dumping comes in the form of untreated industrial waste and chemicals from the Khalishpur industrial area, said locals. In the meantime, the negligence of the authorities concerned has made way for another major menace -- encroachment, they added.

"Lack of proper maintenance and mindless dumping of garbage is gradually filling up the canal and polluting its water," said Tapon Kumar Das, a resident of Pabla under ward-6 of Khulna City Corporation.

"Besides, influential people have built illegal establishments occupying land on both sides of the Bastuhara canal," he added.

"I used to go to my paddy field at Paschim Bilpabla using the canal. But in the last ten to twelve years, the canal has turned into a garbage dump," said Abdur Rob, a resident of nearby Bastuhara colony.

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# Ensure food for poor: GM Quader

UNB, Dhaka

Jatiya Party Chairman GM Quader yesterday urged the government to ensure food security of poor and jobless people during this lockdown, by making an unbiased list of them.

"Families of unemployed people are going through serious ordeal amid coronavirus," he said in a statement.

Referring to a recent study by PPRC and Brac, the Jatiya Party chief said living standards of about 15 percent of the country's people -- or about 2.45 crore -- have fallen below the poverty line anew during the one year of the Covid pandemic.

He said there are now nearly 3.5 crore poor people in the country with the new ones.

GM Quader, also the deputy opposition leader in parliament, said the number of poor people in the country will increase further due to the lockdown enforced by the government to tackle the second wave of the coronavirus.

He said many people have lost their sources of income due to the lockdown. "There's no food at the homes of those who live from hand to mouth."

Quader said many families of unemployed poor are

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LINKS TO 'CHAKRIJIBI LEAGUE'

# Helena Jahangir loses AL post

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Businessperson turned politician, Helena Jahangir, has been relieved from ruling Awami League's sub-committee on women's affairs over her activities in social media.

"She [Helena] has been relieved from her membership of the Awami League's subcommittee on women's affairs as her recent activities in social media are against the organisation's policy," said a press release signed by AL's women affairs secretary Meher Afroz Chumki yesterday.

Helena, the founder and CEO of Jayayatra Television, became a member of the AL's Central Sub-committee on Women affairs on January 18.

Earlier, she became a member of the advisory council of Cumilla (north) unit of AL.

Helena recently came into discussion after an announcement on a Facebook



post to form "Awami Chakrijibi League" and claiming herself as the organisation's president.

She also announced that presidents and general secretaries will be appointed in the district, upazila and overseas units of the organisation in her post that

went viral on social media.

Mentioning the issue, AL general secretary Obaidul Quader yesterday said, "As per the constitutional provision of Awami League, it has associate bodies and sub-committees. Apart from recognised bodies, there is no scope for any organisation to get engaged with the party by adding words like 'League' or 'Awami' with its name."

In his regular press briefing, Quader, also road transport and bridges minister, said when a party stays in power, different groups of opportunists and "cuckoos of spring" make such evil attempts to engage with the party and different "parasites" also get engaged, reports BSS.

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PALLABI TRADER MURDER

# Accused placed on three-day remand

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday placed an accused on a three-day remand in a case filed over murder of trader Shahinuddin in the capital's Pallabi.

Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate Dhiman Chandra Mondol passed the order after Syed Iftekhhar Hossain, inspector of Detective Branch of police and also investigation officer of the case, produced Babu Hasan with a five-day remand prayer, court sources said.

The IO said Babu is an FIR-named accused and he admitted his involvement. He was directly involved with the murder, so he needed to be remanded to get further information.

A team of Pallabi police on July 24 arrested Babu, 22, from Pallabi area and handed him over to DB police.

On May 16, a group of miscreants led

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# A university office that keeps missing deadlines

Delay in issuing documents frustrates students at JU

MD ASADUZZ ZAMAN

Mohammad Selim (not his real name), a student of economics department at Jahangirnagar University (JU), desperately needed a temporary certificate of his examinations to apply for a scholarship.

On March 7, he came to the university's Office of the Controller of Examinations to collect the certificate but was told that it would take at least 21 days, if he wanted it through the regular process, which would cost Tk 200.

Selim did not have much time, as the application deadline was March 28. To his relief, he was informed that there was an "emergency" service by which certificates are provided in seven days at the cost of Tk 400.

Selim went for it, depositing the required money to the bank that day, and kept waiting.

Meanwhile, deadline for submission of the scholarship application was extended till April 15. However, he did not get the certificate even a month

after availing the so-called emergency service.

In the end, Selim could not apply.

"It's utterly frustrating," he said.

Selim's case is not an isolated one, as the office of examination controller takes an unnecessarily long time to provide certificates and other necessary documents to students, depriving them of many opportunities.

A number of students expressed frustration over the delay, alleging that university authorities charge an additional Tk 200 for "emergency" service but hardly ever meet the deadline.

They said the controller office takes a long time to even provide students' grade sheets or transcripts. Authorities claimed that they cannot issue certificates until the syndicate allows it.

Sources, however, said one of the reasons for the delay is lack of manpower and absence of automation, which makes the job dependent on

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# Facebook post prompts action from cops

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Police have re-opened a mobile repairing shop that was shut down allegedly by extortionists in Chattogram, following a Facebook video post by the shop owner.

Ershad, a physically-challenged youth from Hathazari posted the video, saying his shop was shut down by miscreants over extortion, said a press release signed by AIG Sohel Rana yesterday.

Hathazari police were assigned to verify the incident and take action.

The incident occurred on June 23 at Hathazari's Burma Colony. That day, the youth at a press conference in Chattogram Press Club said extortionists demanded Tk 20,000 from him. When he refused to pay, they ransacked and closed the shop.

The press release said police opened the shop in the presence of local UP chairman and others concerned, and warned to take action if there is any further allegation.



PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

Shutters down, gates locked, there's no one at most of the capital's markets these days. But this also means there's an increased chance of break-ins and theft, and to thwart them, security personnel are on their toes, tirelessly guarding their spots all day. Of course, until the fatigue kicks in and one falls back on their chair in slumber. This photo was taken yesterday from the capital's Patuatuli area.

# Campaign against trafficking launched

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh UN Network on Migration has launched an eight-day social media campaign from Saturday to promote activities against and increase awareness on human trafficking through online platforms, marking the World Day Against Trafficking in Persons 2021.

For this, an event page "Observing World Day Against Trafficking in Persons 2021" has been created on Facebook. International Organisation for Migration (IOM) Bangladesh is the secretariate and coordinating body of BDUNNM.

According to details of the event page, its activities aim to promote the content and message of the day and promote content against human trafficking and on safe migration.

It stressed need for comprehensive awareness campaign using social media in fight against human trafficking.

As part of the campaign, a webinar to commemorate the day and organised by the Counter-Trafficking in Persons Technical Working Group (CTPTWG) under BDUNNM is scheduled to take place on Wednesday.

Different civil society and migrant rights groups have also been part of the campaign which will continue till July 31.

Alongside Facebook, activities of the awareness campaign will be promoted and shared on other social media platforms including twitter, Instagram, and YouTube.

According to details of the event page, Bangladesh is a source, transit, and destination country for men, women, and child victims of human trafficking while the Covid-19 pandemic has had a variety of effects on people's vulnerability to human trafficking.

The theme for the World Day Against Trafficking in Persons 2021 is "Victims' Voices Lead the Way".

BDUNNM was launched on July 7, 2019 to ensure coordinated, effective, and timely support to Bangladesh government in implementing the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM).